Christ in the Daily Meal

NORMAN FOX

MAY 13 1930

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ERRATA

CHRIST IN THE DAILY MEAL

The following errors appear in this edition, attributable to careless type-handling after the final proof revision:

Page 11, line 1, "brake" should be "break";

26, line 8 from bottom, "baptsim" should be "baptism";

58, line 10 from bottom, "bearking" should be "breaking";

87, line 2 from bottom, insert "is" between "it" and "not."

Christ in the Daily Meal:

OR

THE ORDINANCE OF THE BREAKING OF BREAD

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BY

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"They did eat their meat with gladness"

EVANGELICAL
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

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To my friends, the Editors of THE INDEPENDENT *and the members of* THE BAPTIST MINISTERS' CONFERENCE OF NEW YORK AND VICINITY, *is dedicated this expansion of a brief paper which, read before the latter and published by the former (March, 1895), created some discussion.*

MORRISTOWN, NEW JERSEY,
February, 1898.

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
MAY 13 1938

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CHRIST IN THE DAILY MEAL.

I.

The Question.

SAID Jesus to his disciples,—"This do in remembrance of Me." But how often was their eating of bread and drinking of wine to be done with thought of Him? Once a month,—once a week,—occasionally,—now and then? Was not his command this,—that each time and whenever they ate bread to sustain their mortal bodies they should think of him, the food of their souls; and that whenever they took in their hands their cup of the blood of the grape, the drink of their daily meals, they should be thereby reminded of his blood shed for them?

Let us review those paragraphs of the New Testament which refer to the break-

ing of bread. They may be catalogued as follows:—

The feeding of the five thousand—Matthew xiv. 19; Mark vi. 41; Luke ix. 16; John vi. 11; and of the four thousand—Matthew xv. 36; Mark viii. 6.

The Saviour's last Passover—Matthew xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19; 1 Corinthians xi. 23.

The meal at Emmaus—Luke xxiv. 30.

The breaking of bread at Jerusalem—Acts ii. 42, 46.

The breaking of bread at Troas—Acts xx. 7, 11.

Paul's repast in the shipwreck—Acts xxvii. 35.

Communion with Christ and communion with demons—1 Corinthians x. 14.

The church meals at Corinth—1 Corinthians xi. 17.

Compare also:—

The Bread of Life—John vi. 31.

The Agapæ or Love-Feasts—2 Peter ii. 13; Jude 12.

These should be read in the Revised

Version; also in the very excellent translation issued by the American Baptist Publication Society.

And now in proceeding to the study of these passages, let us attempt a difficult thing, namely, to divest our minds of all inherited preconceptions, to restrain ourselves from injecting into the meaning of the text ideas received from outside sources, to read the familiar sections as if they were entirely new to us. For so only can we gather from them their natural and true meaning.

II.

Took—Blest—Brake—Gave.

IN the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks and blessed and brake them and gave to his disciples. In the record of the feeding of the four thousand the same acts and words appear. In the meal at Emmaus, the Saviour "when he had sat down with them to meat, took the bread and blessed it and brake and gave to them" and "he was known of them in the breaking of the bread." Paul also in the shipwreck took bread and gave thanks and "brake it and began to eat" and "themselves also took food."

In each of these cases, "the breaking of bread" pertains to the taking of daily food. And when some old fashioned brother with old fashioned hospitality expresses the hope that at some time

you will stop and "brake bread" with him and his household, that is, eat a meal with them, he uses strictly biblical phraseology.

Be it carefully observed that when Jesus at his last Passover took bread and gave thanks and blessed and brake it and gave to the disciples, he did nothing peculiar to that occasion. He had done the same at the feeding of the five thousand and of the four thousand and did it afterwards in the meal at Emmaus, while Paul did in like manner on his vessel, and indeed every pious Jew did all this whenever he took food.

Says Prof. W. N. Clarke, in the *American Commentary*, on the "took bread and blessed," of Mark xiv. 22: "This was no 'prayer of consecration,' it was the simple 'grace' or 'blessing' over food." And of the thanksgiving over the cup, (v. 23), he says; "This too was a simple 'grace before meat.'"

Nor is there anything peculiar in the fact that there was a thanksgiving first

over the bread and then over the wine. In the Passover celebration, as will be seen in all accounts of the Jewish paschal customs, there was a succession of blessings asked over the different courses of the meal. We may note also that in the feeding of the four thousand, (Mark viii. 6, 7), there was one blessing over the loaves and another over the fishes.

On that Passover night every Jewish father of a family took bread and gave thanks and blessed and brake it and gave to those that sat with him, and then blessed and gave out the wine also, just the same as did Jesus. There was then nothing in this to separate Jesus' last Passover from previous Passover occasions observed by himself, or from the ordinary Passover gatherings of Jewish families, nor indeed from the daily meals of any pious Israelite. The force of the record is simply that in doing these things, which were customary at all meals, he added a special injunction, an admonition peculiar to that occasion.

III.

The Old and the New.

THE point may be one of no great importance, but carefulness of statement forbids us to declare, as many have done, that it was not till after the completion of the Passover feast, the supper of the old dispensation, that Jesus appointed the new memorial. For the record expressly says that it was "as they were eating" the paschal meal that he bade them henceforth eat in remembrance of him. Says Edersheim; "If now we ask ourselves at what part of the paschal supper the new institution was made, we cannot doubt that it was before the supper was completely ended." So say other commentators.

Nor was the "cup after supper" something apart from and independent of that meal; it was a concluding cup of the

Passover ritual. As the cup mentioned in Luke xxii. 17, might be termed a cup before the supper, though it was in fact the first course of the repast, so "the cup after supper" was simply its closing portion. As the coffee at the modern formal dinner might be said to come after the meal or on the other hand to be the concluding part thereof, so "the cup after supper"—which indeed came after the main portion of the supper, namely, the lamb and the bitter herbs—was in fact but the final course of the repast, not something after its full conclusion and thus entirely unrelated thereto. It was in giving the paschal bread that Jesus commanded them to eat in remembrance of him; it was in handing a paschal cup that he bade them drink in memory of his death. Indeed it may be said that the Passover celebration was not fully at an end till they "had sung an hymn" before they "went out," this hymn, a part of the Great Hallel, being the standard conclusion of the paschal

rites. It is the general view which is given by Abbott in his Commentary on Matthew when he says that the expression,—as they were eating, "clearly indicates that the Lord's Supper was instituted *during the progress of the Paschal Supper*, not as a separate ordinance at its close."

Nor can we say, as many have done, that the Passover was then done away and the new memorial put in its place. The Apostles certainly did not understand this to be the case, for they went right on keeping the Passover just the same as before.

They discontinued none of the ancient rites. Peter and John, (Acts iii. 13), went up to the Temple at the hour of prayer or evening sacrifice, it evidently never occurring to them,—what later theologians have taught,—that the Levitical sacrifices were done away in the crucifixion. The fact that the disciples had "favor with all the people," (Acts ii. 47), shows that they did not shock their fel-

low Israelites by abandoning their ancestral observances. They are well represented by the good Ananias of Damascus who was "a devout man according to the law," keeping all the Mosaic rites so strictly as to have "a good report of all the Jews" (Acts xxii. 12). In Acts xx. 6, Luke notes "the days of unleavened bread," and in verse 16 we see Paul "hastening if it were possible to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost." The Apostles and the other believing Jews did not in any point abandon the Mosaic ritual. Their new faith and order was merely an addition to their Judaism, not in any way a substitute therefor.

To illustrate; they did not put baptism in the place of circumcision. Not only did they baptize those who were already circumcised but Timothy was circumcised though already baptized, and it was strongly urged that circumcision be required of the thousands of baptized Gentiles also. If Paul knew that "baptism took the place of circumcision," why did

he not flourish that fact in the face of his bitter opponents when this would at once and completely have overthrown their demand for the circumcision of the Gentile converts?

So far from there being on the part of the Jewish disciples a tendency to abandon the Mosaic law, we find among them more than twenty years after the Day of Pentecost a well nigh overpowering demand that the Gentile converts also be required to observe it, a demand to which the Galatian churches were actually brought to succumb. The fact that it was necessary as late as the year 50 or thereabout to lay before an apostolic council the question whether the believing Gentiles should be compelled to keep Moses' law, implies that no one even dreamed that the Jewish disciples might abandon it. A quarter of a century after the resurrection we find that the "many thousands" of Jews which believe are "all zealous of the law," (Acts xxi. 20), that is, they are still circumcis-

ing their children, keeping the Seventh Day, and offering the Levitical sacrifices just as strictly as their unbelieving countrymen, or as their fathers had done before them. And this is said, moreover, not merely of a faction but of "all," including of course the Apostles.

Not even "gradually" did they give up the ancient ritual; for that word "zealous" signifies more than a broad minded toleration of antiquated usage; it implies a vehement insistence on the strictest observance. And Paul himself took part in that ceremony of the vow the more emphatically to declare that on this point he did not differ from the strictest of his fellow Hebrews, and that he did not teach that the Jewish disciples should cease to observe the Mosaic rites.

It is not strange that the Jewish believers as well as their unbelieving countrymen were shocked at the report that Paul was teaching that the ancient usages could lawfully be discontinued. Be it observed, that in the Law the Passover

was to be kept not merely till some new memorial should be instituted but "throughout your generations by an ordinance forever." (Exodus xii. 14). Circumcision was ordained not for a few centuries merely and then to give place to another rite but "throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant." (Genesis xvii. 7, 13). And the Seventh Day, the day of God's rest from creation, was to be hallowed not merely till some greater event should confer greater honor on some other day but "throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant, a sign forever." (Exodus xxxi. 16, 17). In the face of such explicit declarations, the idea that a Jew was at liberty to abandon these observances seemed an impious rejection of the plainest word of God.

Says Prof. Stifler of Crozer Theological Seminary (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, Oct., 1896); "There is no reason why a Jew on becoming a Christian should cease to be a Jew. Circumcision, the Seventh

Day, the distinction in meats, have not been abolished for him." This is saying that for a converted Jew to neglect circumcising his children or to discontinue the observance of the Seventh Day is as wrong for him as it would be for us to refuse to be baptized, a doctrine directly conflicting with the ideas of modern churches, but sustained by the passages above quoted. If the words of these texts do not enjoin the perpetuity of those ancient institutions, what form of speech would serve to convey that idea? Upon what principle of the construction of statutes can writers on ecclesiastical polity declare that the Christian Jew of to-day need not keep the ancient Sabbath or the Passover without their at the same time absolving the Friends from the necessity of the observance of water baptism?*

*On the other hand, as against the principle of "strict construction," it may be noted that although the Passover law plainly said, "And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in

The Jewish disciples were as thoroughly Jewish as the Sadducees or Pharisees or any other "sect" of the Israelitish cult. Till the burning of the Temple they continued to offer the Levitical sacrifices and to observe the other Mosaic precepts just as strictly as they had done before they believed on Jesus. And so we must say that their eating of bread in remembrance of the Master did not "take the place" of their Passover supper but was observed in addition to, parallel with and independent of the same. All must accept the statement of Prof. McGiffert in his *Christianity in the Apostolic Age:* "There is no indication in our sources that in these early days the Lord's Supper was thought of as a continuation of or

haste," (Exodus xii. 11), the Saviour and the Eleven, with the other Jews of their time, ate it reclining on couches and with the utmost deliberation. It was also written, "And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning," but Jesus and his company "went out into the Mount of Olives." What principle is to be adopted in construing the commands of Scripture concerning ritual?

substitute for the Jewish Passover or that any paschal significance whatever attached to it."

And their adherence to the Mosaic Law makes plain beyond contradiction another noteworthy fact, namely, that the members of the church at Jerusalem did not hold the doctrine of the modern church of Rome that the bread of the supper is a sacrifice, the table an altar and the minister a priest. For the old Altar, the old Sacrifices and the old Priesthood, which still remained, were in their view still the appointed media of atonement with God, and of course they cannot have believed in two altars, two priesthoods and two contemporaneous sets of sacrifices.

IV.

"*Hoc Est.*"

WHAT did Jesus mean when he said, "This is my body,—my blood"?

The church of Rome in the decrees of the Council of Trent declares that "by the consecration of the bread and of the wine a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of his blood." Under this doctrine the words of Jesus could be paraphrased as:—This which a moment ago was bread, and which to all the senses appears still to be bread, is bread no longer, but has been transubstantiated and changed so that now it is my body. The, "This *is*," would be construed as meaning,—This *has become*—my body.

The Lutherans go so far in this direction as to declare that "the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed to those that eat in the Lord's Supper," (*Augsburg Confession*); and that "the true body and true blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are truly and substantially present and are distributed with the bread and wine and are taken with the mouth by all those who use this sacrament be they worthy or unworthy, good or bad, believers or unbelievers" (*Formula of Concord*). They deny transubstantiation and hold that the bread and wine remain such, but they assert that the body and blood of Christ are mysteriously and supernaturally united with the physical elements so that the former are eaten and drunk when the latter are. Under this doctrine the, "*This* is" might be paraphrased as,—*Here* is—my body.

The Presbyterians declare in the Westminster Confession that worthy receivers do inwardly by faith really and indeed

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receive and feed upon Christ crucified, the body and blood of Christ being really present to the faith of believers. What they mean by this the reader must decide for himself.

The Baptists, however, and many others with them, regard the bread and wine as mere symbols. They declare the physical elements in the new memorial to be simply remembrancers, as were the lamb and the bitter herbs in the Passover meal. They deny that the partaker is spiritually affected by the bread and wine except indirectly as was the pious Israelite in receiving the paschal symbols.

The theory of the Baptists concerning the breaking of bread is the same as their belief regarding baptism, namely, that the outward act is merely symbolic. Though in opposition to the Society of Friends they declare that water-baptism is to be retained,—as a coronation ceremony is fitting when one has become a king,—yet they declare also just as emphatically as do the Friends that salvation is in no

way conditioned on baptism but comes by faith alone. And it is in what they consider the only logical carrying out of this doctrine that they will baptize none but believers and will use nothing but immersion as baptism.

The Church of Rome, holding that there is a regenerative efficacy in the baptismal water, such that one is truly "christened," that is, made a Christian, in baptism, logically baptizes unconscious infants, and also adults, who give practically no signs of "grace." But Baptists holding that baptism is merely a symbol of a spiritual change *already* wrought, baptize none but those who give evidence of being regenerate already and without baptsim. Again, the Church of Rome, which practised immersion down to the thirteenth century, and in Great Britain till the sixteenth, believes baptism to be essential to salvation, and so when one was converted in sickness, and immersion. the ordinary baptism, was out of the question, it administered pouring or

merely sprinkling. But Baptists hold that water-baptism is in no way essential to salvation, and so when the apostolic ceremony of immersion is impracticable they do not have recourse to sprinkling or any other substitute but unhesitatingly let the convert die entirely unbaptized. So far from their believing that immersion is essential to salvation, as some ill-informed persons have ridiculously supposed them to hold, the very fact that Baptists will practice nothing but immersion—which often involves the necessity of letting sick converts and prisoners die without baptism—shows plainly that they consider water-baptism in no way necessary to salvation. Holding that faith is the only condition to salvation they do not scruple in the least, in a case of difficulty, to let a convert die *without any baptismal ceremony whatever*. As compared with others they make very little of baptism.

Now as Baptists hold that baptism will not make a man a Christian any more

than putting a crown on his head will make him a king, and as they deny that immersion is essential to salvation any more than a coronation ceremony is absolutely necessary to real kingship, or a uniform to one's being a soldier, so they declare that the bread and wine are only symbols, mere outward emblems.

This symbolic conception is often called the Zwinglian theory, after the great Swiss reformer. He did indeed adopt it concerning the breaking of bread, and when Hubmeyer and others of his associates went on and applied it to baptism also, Zwingli was at first inclined to go with them. But when he perceived that the baptism of none but believers logically involved a discontinuance of the union between the Church and the State he shrank back, and at last became a violent persecutor of his friends who had adopted Baptist views. Now it is hardly proper to name a theory after a man who shrank from carrying it out to its full extent. It would be more truly historic if the

symbolic conception were called the Baptist theory.

Under this theory, the declaration, "This is my body," is construed metaphorically, like "The field is [in a figure] the world;" "The tares are [representatively] the children of the wicked one;" "The seven good kine are seven years;" "I am the vine;" and, "That rock was Christ." As of a picture we say, "This is Napoleon," so one may understand Jesus as saying,—This is my body, symbolically: and,—This is, in an image, my blood.

V.

Symbolism.

UNDER any theory, the term, "the body of Christ," must refer to Christ himself. The mere flesh of Jesus was but chemical matter and no one can show that it differed from the flesh of any other man "born of a woman." In John vi. 56, 57, the expression, "He that eateth my flesh," is used as an equivalent to, "He that eateth me." We may say therefore with the Helvetic Confession, "His body and blood, that is, Himself"; and with Dean Stanley (*Christian Institutions*), "As in other parts of the Bible the hand, the heart, the face of God, are used for God himself, so the body, the flesh, of Christ are used for Christ himself, for his whole personality and character."

And now let us ask in what sense one

may say that Christ's body and blood are represented by the bread and wine.

Taking the latter first, we recall that vivid picture in Hebrew poetry of the warrior with dyed garments whose apparel is red "like him that treadeth in the wine fat," (Isaiah lxiii. 1,) and in Deuteronomy xxxii. 14, the red wine is termed "the blood of the grape." One may understand that it is this familiar comparison of wine to blood which Jesus uses, bidding them note in the crimson of the cup an image of his blood shed for them.

Some have thought that they beheld a symbolism in the pouring out of the wine. It may be noted however, that the scriptures nowhere speak of the wine as "poured out." For all that we are told to the contrary it may have been dipped out. We are not informed how the cup was filled. It is in the wine itself, not in what is done to it, that the symbol is found.

It may also be remarked that if it be

only by virtue of its color that it represents Christ's blood, it matters not whether the wine be fermented or unfermented. The presence of alcohol is in no way necessary to the symbolism. The spiritual is not dependent on the spirituous.

And though we can hardly accept the view of a certain distinguished author that "cider, milk or even water may be substituted for wine," for neither of these has the suggestive color, yet the red juice of some other berry than the grape could represent Christ's blood.

It may be worth while to note that wine had no part in the Passover ritual as ordained by Moses; it was introduced only by "the elders." But Jesus could use it as a symbol all the same.

Turning now to the bread, it will be remembered that many have thought they saw in it as well as in the wine a direct reference to Christ's death, the breaking of the bread being supposed to be intended to present "His broken body." It should be noted however that in

1 Corinthians xi. 24, "My body which is broken for you,"—the only passage in the Common Version in which the term *broken* is applied to Christ's body, the Revised Version omits the word, while on the other hand the Gospel of John (xix. 36), calls especial attention to the fact that Christ's body was *not* broken. Not only each bone but the flesh of Jesus also was left substantially whole. His body was not torn and mangled but only "pierced" and to speak of it as broken is as incorrect as it would be to say that a loaf of bread is broken when the tine of a fork is thrust into it.

Again, why should a reference to Christ's death be supposed in the breaking of bread at that Passover supper any more than on other Passover occasions and in all other meals? When Jesus broke bread in the feeding of the five thousand did he intend to symbolize his death? Did Paul intend a reference to this when he broke bread on his vessel? Was there a reference to Christ's death

in the daily meals of all the Jews, among whom the breaking of bread was the procedure in, as it was a name for, the ordinary repast? Why should we in this one case ascribe to the breaking of bread a significance which plainly it did not have elsewhere? The fact is that to say there was a reference to Christ's death in the breaking of the bread is as purely fanciful as it would be to imagine that death was symbolized by the reclining at the table.

Jesus already in speaking to the multitude (John vi.) had referred to bread as a symbol of himself. And so at his last Passover, the Lord may be understood to present the loaf as an object parable, saying,—This which ye eat to sustain your mortal existence is a symbol of me whom ye must receive as the support of your spiritual life.

The Heidelberg Catechism, under the question why Christ doth call the bread his body, answers that like as bread sustains this temporal life, so his body is the true meat of our souls.

The Belgic Confession, the standard of the Dutch Reformed Church, says, "God hath given us for the support of the bodily and earthly life, earthly and common bread * * * * but for the support of the spiritual and heavenly life which believers have, he hath sent a living bread which descended from heaven, namely, Jesus Christ," and, "Christ that he might represent unto us this spiritual and heavenly bread hath instituted an earthly and visible bread as a sacrament of his body."

In like manner the Articles of Religion of the Reformed Episcopal Church declare the Supper "a symbol of the soul's feeding upon Christ."

Charles Hodge (*Systematic Theology*) makes the bread an "emblem of him who declared himself to be the true bread which came down from heaven" and he says that the Supper "represents our feeding upon Christ for our spiritual nourishment." Such quotations could be multiplied.

We may remark in passing that if it be

simply in its character of food that the bread symbolizes Christ, it is a vain conceit to dwell on merely incidental facts such as that the bread is made from separate grains and that the grains must be crushed. This is an attempt to "make the parable go on all fours."

Nor matters it whether the bread be leavened or unleavened, since in both cases it is food the same. The fact that the bread was unleavened presents it as travelers' food, the bread of haste, a matter of significance in the ancient memorial but of none in the new. And of course one need not be troubled by a question like that which Parkman mentions as discussed between Huguenots and Catholics among the "Pioneers of France in the New World," whether the sacramental bread could be made of the meal of Indian corn. Bread is bread, no matter of what it be compounded.

And if it be merely as sustenance of the body that the bread symbolizes Christ the support of the soul, the term

bread may be given the same meaning in this connection as in the, "Give us this day our daily bread," and may include all forms of food. In Acts ii. 46 and xxvii. 34–36, where the breaking of bread is mentioned, ἄρτος, *bread*, is made synonymous with τροφή, *nourishment*.*

Alford on Matthew xxvi. 26, makes τοῦτο, *this*, equivalent to "the food of man" and says that in this passage "we have bread 'the staff of life' identified with the body of the Lord." This construction makes the term *bread* include all varieties of food, and it would sanction what is said sometimes to have occurred in far northern islands, the use of dried fish in place of a loaf in the church supper.†

Instead, therefore of regarding the

* And while τοῦτο, *this*, being neuter, cannot agree with ἄρτος, *bread*, which is masculine, it will, by coincidence, agree with βρῶμα, *food*.

† And would it not be limiting the power of the priestly *Hoc est* to doubt that it could transubstantiate something else than a wheaten wafer into the true body, something else than grape wine into the true blood?

bread and wine as, like the kine and wheat-heads of Pharaoh's dream, mere duplicate emblems of the same thing, many regard the bread as symbolizing Christ himself in his whole personality and work, while the wine sets forth the crowning act of his ministry, his yielding himself a sacrifice; the bread recalling the whole Christ and the wine his death. So Godet on Luke says that the supper seems "to represent the totality of salvation; the bread, the communication of the life of Christ; the wine, the gift of pardon; in other words, according to Paul's language, sanctification and justification." And on 1 Corinthians x. 16, he says, "In the blood represented by the cup we contemplate and apply to ourselves Christ *dead for us;* in the body, represented by the bread we appropriate Christ *living in us.*"

The late Dr. H. J. Van Dyke writes, "Christ did not say, 'This do in remembrance of *my death*' * * * * Christ himself in his divine fullness and not any part

of his person or of his history is the subject and the substance of the sacrament. His death as the sacrifice for sin, though it is the central point, is but a small part of the history of his relation to his redeemed people."

VI.

"Our Daily Bread" as the Body of Christ.

TO determine the meaning of the words, "This is my body," let us ask,—Just when does the bread become the body of Christ?

The Roman Catholic answers that it is when the consecrated priest utters the august formula that the mysterious change takes place. But what evidence has he that any change is wrought in the bread and wine?

It is not correct to say that the Roman Catholic takes Christ's words "literally." His construction of the Lord's declaration is,—This is my body *as a moment ago it was not*. The latter clause however is an unwarranted addition; it is

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not expressed nor in any way implied in Jesus' own words.

One has no right to construe the declaration, "This is my body," as meaning,—This has been changed into, has become, my body. The word *Is* does not mean *Has become;* it predicates simply existence without any suggestion of a beginning. The declaration, "This is a diamond," does not imply that it was formerly something else than a diamond. And if to a group of tourists it be said, "That officer on the gray horse is the Kaiser," he does not then first become Kaiser. And so the words, "This is my body," do not in any way suggest that it has not been Christ's body heretofore.

The implication is in fact just the opposite. What a thing is to-day we must assume it to have been yesterday and last week and indefinitely hitherto. If a man asserts that what a thing is now, it formerly was not, the burden of proof is on him. Until therefore it be clearly

shown that the bread has indeed undergone a change we must hold that the loaf which is Christ's body now as it lies on the church table was his body just the same before it came to the table and has been his body from the first.

Till the additional idea has been proved untenable the words, "This is," mean also,—This was. Wherefore the "literal" and only logical construction of Jesus' words is,—This is my body *as it always has been.*

Says Martin Luther in arguing for the doctrine of the Real Presence, "We should allow the words of Scripture to retain their natural force and should assign no other signification to them." But he himself directly violates this canon and ascribes an "other signification" to the words, "This is my body," when he construes them as meaning,—This is my body, as it has not been heretofore. The "natural force" of the Lord's words is,—This is my body as it has been from the first.

Take, again, the quip ascribed to Queen Elizabeth,—

> "It was the Word that spake it.
> He took the bread and brake it,
> And what his word doth make it,
> That I believe and take it."

This is very good; but what does the Lord "make it"? He does not say or hint that the bread has undergone a change so that it is now what it was not before. No suggestion of any such transmutation is found in the Saviour's words nor in the necessities of the case. And in the failure to produce evidence of a change, all forms of the doctrine of the Real Presence, whether Roman, Lutheran or Anglican, break down utterly and completely.

To determine therefore the sense in which the bread on the Church table is Christ's body, we have only to inquire in what sense it was his body before it came to the table. Certainly it was not such in constituent substance. It was however his body even then in symbol, the food

of the natural life being an image of Christ the bread of heaven. Until therefore some one shows that it was or has become his body in some other sense, the only fair construction we can assign to Jesus' declaration is,—This is my body, my blood, in a figure; or,—This is, symbolically, my body.

But even in "Evangelical" circles, where the bread and wine are considered merely symbols, the idea lingers that they are made what they were not before. This shows itself in that common term, "the consecration of the elements." Now in what sense are the bread and wine consecrated when they are declared symbols of Christ's body and blood? Were the leaven and the mustard seed "consecrated" in any manner when Jesus pronounced them figures of divine things? When he said,—"I am the vine,"—he did not impart to the vine any new quality or make it in any way to differ from what it had always been. How then are the bread and wine, when declared to be sym-

bols, made what they were not before? Is not this term, " the consecration of the elements," merely a survival of Roman Catholic doctrine?

If a man gave to his friend, say, an ancient coin to remember him by, this would indeed undergo a change, the act of the giver imparting to it a memorial quality which it did not before possess. But were it his photograph which the man presented the case would be different. The coin is a remembrancer only by arbitrary appointment; the portrait, in its original nature. Of the coin, the giver says, " *Let this become* a reminder"; of the likeness, he says, " *This is* something which will make you think of me." The coin is given that it may be changed into a memorial; the picture, because it has the memorial quality already. Now the bread and wine are not arbitrarily appointed remembrancers; they are remembrancers by their very nature, the loaf being a figure of the bread of heaven and the wine an image of Christ's blood.

They are not changed into Christ's body and blood; they are such already.

Till it is clearly shown, what has never been shown, that there is indeed some change wrought in or passed upon the loaf on the Church table, we must say that it is Christ's body not because of any change it has undergone but by virtue of its original character, that it does not become Christ's body but is such by its proper nature.

And now if the words of Christ do not mean,—This is my body as a moment ago it was not,—they cannot be construed as meaning,—This is my body as other bread is not. If the loaf on the Church table be Christ's body not in virtue of a change wrought in or passed upon it, but by reason of its original character as food, then every other loaf is his body just the same, for each other loaf possesses the same character and contains in itself the same symbolism.

When the wife of the deacon or sacristan, making bread for her household

takes out one loaf for use in Church, at what exact time does that loaf become Christ's body? This loaf is borne to the church not that it may be there changed into Christ's body, but because of the fact that it is such already, being even now, as material food, an image of the the bread of heaven. It is the symbolic body of Christ even now as it still lies among its fellow loaves and these other loaves though carried to the home table are Christ's body in just the same sense, for they also symbolize Christ, the bread of life.

The ancient coin which a man gives his friend as a souvenir is by that act made to differ from all other coins even of the same kind. But the photograph presented as a remembrancer is such only as is every other photograph struck from the same negative. Now the loaf on the church table has no memorial character which is not possessed by every other loaf, and thus its fellow loaves are Christ's symbolic body as truly as it.

Had Jesus pointed to a particular vine and said, "I am *this* vine"; we should still have understood him to speak not of that one vine alone but of every vine, for in every vine resides the like symbolism. When according to an old time formula the so-called "consecration of the elements" was cautiously limited to "so much as is needed," wherein was the "needed" portion made to differ from the unconsecrated remainder when the latter represented as truly as the former the bread of heaven and the atoning blood? There is no symbolism in one loaf which is not found in every loaf, none in one wine which is not in all wine. One bread represents Christ's body only as does every other bread. If therefore, the, "This is," means,—This represents —my body; all bread is Christ's body as much as any one bread. The symbolic theory makes every loaf Christ's body, all wine his blood.

When St. Patrick according to legend held up before the people the shamrock

as a symbol of the Trinity, he did not then and there make it a symbol; he held it forth because it was already such a symbol. Nor did he speak merely of the one sprig he then presented in his hand. That particular leaf illustrated the doctrine only as did every other trefoil. He in effect declared every sprig of shamrock an image of the great mystery. And so the declaration, "This is my body," cannot be understood to mean that the bread then first becomes Christ's body; nor, again, to refer to one loaf as distinct from others. The loaf represents Christ's body only as it always has done, and only as does every other loaf, the bread on the home table just as fully as that on the plates in church.

For the manna in the desert was not less a type of Christ, a "spiritual meat," because it was the every day food of the people. A genuine shepherd, a man actually guarding sheep, would represent Jesus fully as well as a boy dressed up like a shepherd in a Sunday School

tableau. And so the loaf of the daily meal, eaten actually to sustain life, symbolizes Christ our daily Saviour and support certainly as well as a little cube of bread eaten at rare intervals in the mere imitation of a meal.

The Westminster Confession speaks of the bread on the Church table as "set apart from a common to a holy use." But the bread devoted to the "common" use of the support of the body is in fact the only bread which is truly capable of the sacred use of representing Christ the support of the soul. For the church supper presents no symbolism whatever except as it is assumed to be an ordinary meal. The church bread does not represent Christ, is not his body at all, except as it purports to be "daily" bread. It is the bread to which one sits down faint and hungry which is the true likeness of the bread of heaven, the food so much and so continually needed by our starving, perishing souls. It is in fact only the bread of the daily meal, eaten actually to

support life, which truly represents and thus "is" Christ's body.

We have an analogous case in the washing of feet commanded by the Lord "the same night." The true exhibition of Christ-like humility is not when pope or kaiser dramatically laves a poor man's feet which have been carefully cleansed and perfumed beforehand; it is when a Sister Dora in the hospital washes the noisome feet of a dying tramp. The foot-washing which Jesus ordained was the washing of dirty feet. Those churches which consider it their duty literally to maintain the practice should perform the act on Saturday night when the feet still reek with the sweat of toil, for it is a solemn farce to defer the procedure till Sunday morning when the real cleansing has been already done. And just as unreasonably do they exalt form above substance who deem the bread of a merely dramatic meal a better symbol of the sustaining Christ than the food eaten actually to support existence. As it is

not a pretended but a real washing of feet which displays humility, so it is not a pretended but a real taking of food which shows forth the soul's feeding on Christ.

When Paul says, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do shew the Lord's death till he come," (1 Corinthians xi. 26), we cannot understand him to distinguish between "this bread" and other bread any more than to understand that when Jesus says, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine," he distinguishes between this and some other fruit of the vine which he may drink. The bread and cup of the disciples' daily meal served to symbolize and "shew" the Lord and his death as fully as did the loaf and cup of their church gatherings. There was no symbolism in their church meals which was not found in their daily repasts. And in like manner one cannot declare of the bread on the church table of to-day that it alone is the body of Christ, for it does not repre-

sent Christ any more fully than does the loaf of the daily meal.

Since the words, "This is my body," mean,—This is my body in a symbol, This represents my body,—and since all bread symbolizes Christ the food of the soul just the same as any one bread, then, all bread is the body of Christ, the loaf on the cottage-board, just as truly as the wafer on the high altar of the cathedral; and one wine is his blood only as is every other wine, all blood of the grape being an image of Christ's blood shed for men. Therefore, whenever a disciple beholds in his daily bread an image of Christ the food of his soul, that daily bread is the body of Christ just as truly as is the loaf of ecclesiastical ceremony.

VII.

May One Disciple "Do This"?

ON whom did Jesus lay the command, "This do ye"? Taken by itself, the injunction would apply indifferently to the disciples as a body, or as individuals. Did the Saviour mean,—Unite and do this,—or,—This do ye *each one of you*, in company with others or alone?

It has been assumed that we have here a "church ordinance"; that the command was given to the disciples as a corporation and therefore that the memorial eating can be done only by the assembled congregation, or at least by the authorization of the whole Church.

The Eleven, however, to whom these words were addressed were not a church. They were not the whole body of disciples even there in Jerusalem. They were more like a traveling theological semi-

nary than a church. They were in fact a family, a group of travelers having the right under Jewish usage to act as a household for the purposes of the paschal celebration. Nor is there any ground for saying that they "represented the church" any more than did the household at Bethany or than did any one of the many other groups of believing Galilean pilgrims who that night ate the Passover in and around Jerusalem. And the fact that the paschal feast like our Thanksgiving Dinner was not a public and general, but a family and private gathering would suggest that the new memorial can be celebrated by a smaller group than the whole church.

Sometimes after a meeting of the Evangelical Alliance or on some other such occasion there is held a "Union Communion Service." But this is not a church gathering. No ecclesiastical body authorizes the celebration nor is any asked so to do. Those who take part in it do so merely as individual Christians,

acting entirely outside church connections. It is not an ecclesiastical assemblage any more than is a prayer meeting in the cabin of an ocean steamer. Now those who say that the command of Christ is obeyed when two hundred individual Christians eat and drink in remembrance of the Lord, must say that it will be just as truly obeyed if only two do this or when a disciple alone by himself breaks bread in remembrance of the Saviour.

Among the Baptists there are many who declare that the memorial eating cannot properly be observed at the meeting of an Association or at any other general gathering but only by a local congregation. Even these, however, will admit that it may take place in the chamber of the sick provided the occasion be a church meeting formally appointed. But surely it is a piece of ecclesiastical pettifogging to call that a church assembly from which it is intended that the church members with two or three exceptions shall all stay away.

It is true that the Master uses the plural form, "This do ye." But so does he in, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me,"—"Abide in me and I in you," —"Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name; ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full,"—injunctions given at the same sitting and in which he is certainly addressing the disciples not as a corporation but as individuals. Now remembrance of Christ is an individual act as truly as believing in Christ, abiding in him or asking in his name, and we must say therefore that if a disciple, sitting down alone by himself, eats and drinks in remembrance of the Saviour he obeys this memorial ordinance just as fully as if he ate and drank in the great congregation.

Whether a command addressed to a plurality of persons is intended for them as a company or as individuals may be determined by the nature of the injunction. If a minister called on his congregation to arise and build a new house of

worship, we should understand that they were to act as a body. If, however, he demanded of them to be prayerful, or to love their enemies, we should regard him as addressing them individually. Now remembrance of Christ, like faith in Christ, is the act not of a corporation but of a single person, and a command therefor must be regarded as contemplating individual action.

A Christian Robinson Crusoe, a lone missionary like Livingstone, the one pious sailor on board ship or the single devout traveler in the caravan would need to remember Christ, and why should he not do this in the bearking of bread? Is there not as much reason for his so doing in his loneliness as there would be had he a thousand to join him? The command, "Believe in me," or, "Abide in me," would be given all the same were there but one disciple in the world, and why is it not the same with the injunction, "This do ye in remembrance of me"? Why should not any disciple at any time

break bread even alone in remembrance of his Lord?

There are many Baptists who in defending the usage of restricted communion declare that in taking the bread and wine the disciple communes not with his fellow disciples but with Christ alone. If, however, the sole parties to the transaction are the individual believer and Christ why is it necessary that other disciples be present? A man can certainly commune with Christ at home by himself alone as well as in the church assembly.

It will of course be granted that as the Christian delights to pray in company with his brethren and to join his voice with theirs in singing praise to the Redeemer, so he will take pleasure in sitting down with them to eat bread in remembrance of their common Lord. But the breaking of bread is not solely a church ordinance any more than prayer or praise, in which a man can engage alone by himself as well as in company with the whole church, and the disciple

who is isolated from his brethren is not "deprived of the privilege" of a memorial feast any more than of the enjoyment of singing or praying.

The words, "This do ye," do not necessarily mean,—Assemble and do this. The idea that the memorial breaking of bread can lawfully be observed only in ecclesiastical connection has no basis whatever in the New Testament nor in sound reason. One needs no Church warrant for remembering the Lord in the breaking of bread any more than for any other Christian exercise. One can eat and drink in remembrance of Christ alone by himself and on his own authority as freely as he can sing praise by himself alone. As the command, "After this manner pray ye," is observed when a single disciple kneels down and says, "Thy kingdom come," so if a believer eats and drinks in his own home in remembrance of his Saviour, he obeys the command, "This do ye," just as truly as when he goes to the house of God with the multitude to keep holy day.

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VIII.

What did Christ Mean by, "As Oft As—"?

THE Lord's command is—Eat, drink, in remembrance of me. And this is the whole of his command. There is no ground in Scripture for the traditional idea that he orders not only an eating and drinking "in remembrance" but also that this be done apart from other eating and for memorial purposes alone.

One repast may serve two ends. As the table which is spread for the satisfaction of hunger may also be used in the cultivation of friendship with neighbors, so the bread and wine taken by the disciples in support and refreshment of the body could be also made remembrancers of Christ's body and blood. Thus the command to them to eat and drink in remembrance of the Master was not necessarily a

command for a separate meal. That they should fully and completely carry out the injunction, all that was required was that they should eat their daily bread in memory of Christ, the bread of heaven, and make their daily cup a reminder of the blood of Christ, of which that wine was an image.

The Passover Supper was not solely memorial in character. Like our Thanksgiving dinner or the collation at a College Commencement it served as one of the ordinary meals of the day. The command establishing it was simply that on that notable day the food for the support of the body should be a lamb, etc., which would serve also a historical purpose. Why then may not the Christian memorial eating be done in the daily meal? Since the Passover feast was an actual supper, why may not the new remembrance be made in a true repast.

We have already seen (p. 14) that it was a paschal loaf which Jesus bade them eat, a paschal cup which he bade them

drink, as symbols of his body and blood. To the bread and wine of the ancient memorial he gave an additional meaning. But if the loaf and cup of the Saviour's last Passover could serve a double purpose, if remembrance of Christ could be made in the paschal meal, why cannot also the daily repast subserve a two-fold end, reminding of Christ while supporting the body?

Had Jesus intended a special meal like the ancient Passover would he not have appointed for it special articles of food like the lamb and the bitter herbs of the paschal feast? But the materials ordained for the new memorial were simply the bread and wine of the every day meal. Now if the memorial eating was to differ from the ordinary eating in no respect whatever in its outward acts, what ground is there for saying that it was to differ therefrom in time?

What did Jesus tell the disciples to do in remembrance of him? He told them to do only what they were already doing

every day, namely, to eat bread and drink wine. He appointed nothing new to be eaten and drunk, but merely a new thought in eating and drinking what they now ate and drank. All that was necessary to change the old meal into the new was to bring into it a remembrance of Christ. When once the new thought was introduced the daily supper became the required memorial feast.

Let us ask,—Would it be allowable for a disciple of to-day to behold in his daily loaf a symbol of Christ the bread of heaven and to eat this "in remembrance of" the Bread of Life? Please stop and answer. But if the disciple did this would he not do all that we do when we eat of the loaf in church? Wherein would an eating of the daily meal "in remembrance" fall short of the breaking of bread in church? And what occasion was there for the Master to institute for the disciples a new and separate meal when the loaf and cup of their daily repast gave all the symbolism needed for a memorial?

Though the declaration, "This is my body," and the command, "This do in remembrance of me," do not stand in the Gospels in immediate connection, yet each implies the other. Taken together, their meaning is,—Forasmuch as this bread is, in a symbol, my body let it remind you of me. Now what bread is it that, is in a figure, Christ's body? It is (p. 50) the bread which is eaten to satisfy hunger. A loaf eaten for a memorial purpose alone would in fact not be a memorial. The loaf which is not eaten to satisfy hunger is not Christ's symbolic body at all. The bread on the Church table is a figure of Christ's body only as we assume the Church supper to be an ordinary meal eaten to sustain the physical nature. It is only the bread eaten to support the natural life which is a true image of Christ the food of the spiritual life. Therefore it cannot be a special bread which the Lord appoints as a reminder of himself, but only the loaf of the ordinary meal.

If, as the Roman Catholics affirm, it were only the transubstantiated wafer that is Christ's true body, then the sacred eating could be done only apart from the daily meal, for such bread is not found on the home table. But if it be symbolically that the bread is Christ's body, then the loaf of the daily meal is material for the memorial eating, for it symbolizes the bread of heaven, Christ our daily Saviour, as well as, not to say better than, the bread of a purely ceremonial repast.

That the Master did not intend to establish a special eating and drinking, one for memorial purposes only, is seen—is it not?—in the words,—"As oft as,"—which though given only in the command regarding the cup must be understood in regard to the bread also.

If a man receives the injunction,—As often as you go to the city, buy something for those at home,—the direction is not that he shall go to the city for that purpose but that when going to do other things he shall do this also. So the direc-

tion, "As oft as ye [eat and] drink, do this in remembrance of me," commands that the eating and drinking in support and refreshment of the body be also "in remembrance." The thing enjoined is not a new eating but a new thought in the accustomed eating. It is in fact not the eating and drinking, but only the remembrance, that is commanded.

To make the, "As oft as," refer only to a particular wine, drunk for memorial purposes alone, would be to construe the command as,—This particular cup which I command you to drink in remembrance of me, I command you to drink in remembrance of me; or,—As oft as ye drink in remembrance of me, drink in remembrance of me:—a construction which is absurd. The only reasonable paraphrase of the Saviour's words is,—As oft as ye drink with other thoughts, drink at the same time in remembrance of me. It would not be possible to put in plainer words the injunction that the red wine of their daily meals should be

made a reminder of his shed blood. Had he actually intended to command that every cup should have a memorial purpose, in what clearer terms could he have couched that command than this, "As oft as ye drink, do this in remembrance of me"?

The current idea is that Jesus said,—Ye shall eat in remembrance of me *now and then;* ye shall drink in remembrance of me *once in the while.* But these limitations are not expressed in the wording of his command nor are they suggested by the nature of the case.

The question how often a thing is to be done, may be determined by inquiring how often it may profitably be done. How often were the disciples to "consider the lilies" and "behold the fowls of the air"? As often as they needed reminding of God's providential care. And now how often does the disciple need to remember Christ? Once a month? Once a week? Why should he not every time he takes food for the

body think of Christ, the food of the soul?

Jesus terms the wine his "blood of the covenant." When Jehovah made a covenant with ancient Israel, he promising to be their protector and they engaging to be his servants, that sacred agreement was sealed with the blood of a slain victim (Exodus xxiv. 8). And now the disciples have made a new covenant with the Father, (Jeremiah xxxi. 31), not national but personal, of which sacred compact the blood of their Master is to be the seal and witness. In that Eastern country the red juice of the grape was the drink of the daily meal, thus presenting continually an impressive reminder of the blood of the Redeemer, serving daily to "shew" his death. And the Lord says to them,—Whenever ye take in your hands your daily cup of the blood of the grape let it recall to your minds my blood shed for you, and your solemn compact with the Father, of which my blood is to be the witness. Thus were they at every meal to renew their cove-

nant with the Father, daily and continually reminding themselves of their Lord's death till he should come.

The memorial eating then is not a "ceremony." It is not like baptism, which involves an act and words that might not be done and said without special direction; nor is it like the Passover, in which were articles of food that might not have been prepared without specific injunction. The disciples always ate bread and drank wine, and needed no additional command so to do. The believer's eating and drinking in remembrance of Christ was to be in outward act just the same as a worldly man's eating and drinking. The new supper involved no peculiar act; it was merely a customary act done with new thoughts. As it was not a new bow in the cloud but the old familiar arch which God made a memorial in the days of Noah, so it was not a new meal but the ordinary repast which Jesus made a remembrancer; and in the remembrance there is no more of

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"ceremony" than in looking at the rainbow or considering the lilies or beholding the fowls of the air. In the memorial eating which Christ ordained there is no element whatever of ritual; its characteristics are purely spiritual.

It may be remarked that the words, "Do this, as oft as ye drink it," contain no command to drink wine. The injunction,—As often as you go to the city, buy something for the children,—would not be a command to go to the city. And so in the Saviour's words before us there is no command to drink wine but only to remember him.

Nor is there a true command in the, "Drink, all ye, of it" (Matthew xxvi. 26). Of course they would all drink of the Passover cup and no command so to do was needed. The meaning of Jesus' words is simply,—Yes, drink all ye of it; or,—Well may ye all drink of it; for it is my blood of the covenant. Though the clause is imperative in form it is in its significance merely approbative.

Among the "many thousands" of believing Jews who were "all zealous of the law" there was not unlikely many a Nazarite like John the Baptist. This is suggested by the passages, "Having shorn his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow" (Acts xviii. 18), and, "We have four men which have a vow on them" (xxi. 23). Now a believing Nazarite would not have been required by these words of Jesus to cease from his determination to "drink neither wine nor strong drink," nor does this injunction require the drinking of wine by a disciple of to-day who prefers to abstain from it. The words of Jesus were addressed to those who were in the habit of drinking wine at their meals as we drink tea and coffee, and his injunction is not that they shall continue so to do but that in doing it they shall remember him. As to the man not drinking wine, whether ancient Nazarite or modern abstainer, he is left to make his remembrance in some other way, as in rainless countries something else than the

"bow in the cloud" must serve as a memorial concerning the flood.

In concluding this chapter, it may be remarked that in the Lord's, "As oft as ye [eat and] drink, [even in your daily meals], do it in remembrance of me," we have something more than the direction that whatever we do shall be done to the glory of God. We have a special injunction that every meal shall be eaten in the "gladness" of a special remembrance of Christ and his redeeming love.

IX.

Apostolic Precedent.

THE traditional understanding of Jesus' words is,—This is my body, my blood, *as another loaf or cup is not;* eat, drink, *in church assembly*, in remembrance of me, *and for a memorial purpose only*. But the findings in the preceding pages are that the words in italics are no part of the Lord's instructions, that they are utterly unwarranted interpolations.

We have come to the position that the bread and wine which are Christ's body and blood on the church table were such in the same sense before they came to the table; and that such are all bread and wine, all food of the body being symbolic of Christ the bread of heaven, all wine an image of his blood. It is, moreover, the individual believer, primarily,

that is bidden to eat and drink in remembrance of the Master. And finally the disciple is commanded to do this not merely now and then, but whenever he eats and drinks, even in his daily repast.

And now as we turn to Apostolic history in the Acts and Epistles we find no breaking of bread apart from an actual meal. For a supper consisting of but a morsel of bread and one swallow of wine, there is no more precedent in Scripture than for kneeling at a rail to eat. And, again, though memorial eating was done in church assemblies, there is nothing in the record which even remotely indicates that it was confined to them.

In Acts ii. 46, (Rev. Vers.) we read of the disciples at Jerusalem that "breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness." This particular breaking of bread was certainly the ordinary meal. All must agree with the Rev. Wm. Arnot of Edinburgh when in "The Church in the House," he says on this passage:—"It is not the religious ordi-

nance but the common meal that is signalized as having been simple and joyful." But why should "gladness" mark the taking of their food more than the other acts of the daily routine of their lives? Was it not because the Lord had commanded that each daily repast should be a memorial occasion, and that thus they made each home meal a festal hour, a time of solemn joy?

In verse 42, we read that "they continued * * * in the breaking of bread." This implies of course, that they remembered Christ in the breaking of bread. It is generally assumed that they did this in gatherings of the church members; but, be this as it may, we must consider that this eating, like the breaking of bread at Emmaus, (Luke xxiv. 45), and that mentioned in verse 46, was an actual meal, not merely a pretended repast.

Alford says that to render the breaking of bread in verse 42 "to mean the breaking of bread in the Eucharist *as now understood* would be to violate his-

torical truth. The Holy Communion was at first and for some time * * * inseparably connected with the agapæ or love-feasts of the Christians, and unknown as *a separate ordinance*." (Italics his.)

Meyer on this passage says that the modern Eucharist "is of later origin; the separation of the Lord's supper from the joint evening meal did not take place at all in the Apostolic Church."

Says Schaff (*Hist. Christian Church I. 473*): "In the apostolic period the Eucharist was celebrated daily in connection with a simple meal of brotherly love."

Says Hase, (*Hist. Christian Church Sec. 44*:) "The love-feast, in which were combined the ordinary meal and the religious service of the primitive Christians, was originally celebrated in Jerusalem every day."

Says Stanley (*Christian Institutions, p. 44*): "In the Acts, the believers at Jerusalem are described as partaking of a daily meal."

Says McGiffert (*History of Christianity*

in the Apostolic Age): "That the disciples held a special service and partook of a special communion meal, there is no sign. It is far more likely that whenever they ate together they ate the Lord's Supper. Not that it preceded or followed the ordinary meal but that the whole meal was the Lord's Supper; that they partook of no ordinary, secular, unholy meals, of none that was not a κυριακὸν δεῖπνον."

The late President Robinson of Brown University, in some remarks at a dinner of the Baptist Social Union, spoke of such a repast by assembled Christian brethren as reproducing perhaps more completely than anything else we have to-day the religious meal of the Apostolic churches.

As to the declaration that there was a purely ritual supper, eaten at the same sitting but yet apart from the love-feast, preceding or following it, we may say that this idea of two distinct meals has not the least support in the text. It is

"eisegesis" pure and simple, a mere fancy which finds no basis whatever in the evidence. The record puts before us but one breaking of bread, and that not a fictitious but a genuine repast. The same remark may be made of the accounts of the church meals at Troas and Corinth.

In the account of Paul's visit to Troas (Acts xx) it is recorded: "And upon the first day of the week, * * we were gathered together to break bread." Here we certainly have a church supper. But we must also assume that here as at Emmaus and on Paul's vessel, the breaking of bread was an actual repast. The statement of the text is therefore that the brethren assembled to eat a meal in company. Lechler, (*Lange's Com.*), calls it "a meal of brotherly fellowship." It was an *agape* or "love-feast." In it, of course, they remembered Christ, the food of their souls.

The only mention of actual eating is, "When [Paul] was gone up, and had

broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed." Whether the apostle's eating was or was not in the breaking of bread of verse 7, it looks like a taking of food to refresh himself after his long discourse and to strengthen him for his journey. This also would be indicated by the γευσάμενος of the original, the word used in Acts x. 10 where Peter on the housetop "became hungry and desired to *eat*." Nowhere in the text is there any suggestion of a purely ceremonial eating, the mere imitation of a meal.

The fact that this breaking of bread at Troas was at a church gathering has been cited to prove that the breaking of bread is *solely* a church ordinance. But it shows no such thing, any more than the holding of a church prayer-meeting or praise-service would show that the members did not pray or sing except in church assembly. Disciples who sing and pray by themselves will also find pleasure in assembling to pray and sing to Christ, and

so those who remember Christ in the breaking of bread at home will be moved to assemble to break bread in united remembrance of him. But the fact that the brethren at Troas "came together" to break bread does not show that the breaking of bread is solely a church ordinance any more than is praise or prayer.

X.

Union with Christ.

THE breaking of bread is mentioned in the tenth chapter of First Corinthians. The apostle bids the disciples flee from idolatry and also to be cautious about eating meat which has been consecrated to idols. He acknowledges that a heathen deity is only an imaginary being and that the flesh of an animal sacrificed to one of these false gods is not affected thereby; wherefore if a believer in Jesus, going into the market to buy meat for his household, finds a desirable piece, he need not raise the question whether it has not been cut from a sacrificed animal; and in dining with a heathen neighbor, if he thinks it well so to do, he need not be troubled at the possibility that some of the food on the table has been dedicated to idol gods.

But if it be expressly pointed out to him that a given piece of meat has been consecrated to a heathen deity and in eating thereof he might seem to unite in the respect paid this false god, the case is somewhat different. He who eats in honor of a given deity joins himself to that deity and becomes partaker of the nature of that deity. When the believer in Jesus breaks bread and drinks the cup in remembrance and worship of Christ he becomes a partaker of the body and blood—that is, of the nature—of Christ, entering into union with him. When the ancient Israelite ate of the sacrifice to Jehovah he entered into union with Jehovah. But what the heathen sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and the servant of Jesus in eating of these sacrifices will be entering into a participation in the nature of demons, a union with demons, which he would not have them do.

In this passage as in the others examined there is nothing to suggest that

the bread and cup were merely ceremonial, not parts of an actual meal. On the other hand since the feast at an idol sacrifice was an actual feast, and when the Israelite ate of the sacrifice to Jehovah he ate an actual meal, it is more natural to understand that the communion with Christ, which is compared to these, was in an actual taking of food.

Nor do we find here any necessary reference to a church supper as distinguished from a household meal. The term "cup of blessing" was a common one for the third cup of the paschal supper, which as has been remarked was not a public and general but a household meal, and it would apply also to the daily cup on which was asked the divine blessing. In like manner the words "the bread which we break" may refer here as it does in many cases elsewhere to the bread of the private meal. Moreover, the fact that directions are given regarding the purchase in the shambles of meat for the home table, and that the feast at the

house of the heathen friend is a private feast, shows that communing with demons in eating meat offered to idols could be done in the ordinary meal, and this again implies that a communion with Christ could also be eaten at the home table.

As to the words (Rev. Vers.),—"Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body [*margin,* 'seeing that there is one bread, we, who are many, are one body']: for we all partake of the one bread [*margin,* 'loaf'],"—it is too broad to refer to the local church. The Oriental "loaf" was but a little cake, so that to partake of "one" loaf would be impossible for all the members of the large church at Corinth. Again the 'we" includes the apostle himself, who was not a member of that local church but was now far separated from them. We must understand therefore, with Edwards, that οἱ πολλοί are not the assembled "many" but the scattered believers throughout the whole world, who by union with their

common Lord are united to each other. As in praying, each one by himself,

> "Though sundered far, by faith we meet
> Around one common mercy seat";

so in remembering Christ, each one by himself, in the breaking of bread, widely separated Christians are brought together into "one body." There is no necessary reference to a local church assemblage.

When the apostle says, "Ye cannot drink a cup of the Lord and a cup of demons; ye cannot partake of a table of the Lord and a table of demons,"—(the original is not *the* table, *the* cup, but *a*),—it impairs the force of the solemn words to make them refer merely to a church ceremony. He does not mean that a man cannot take part in a Christian rite to-day and a heathen festival to-morrow; that alas is too often done. His assertion is that we cannot make one and the same feast a table of the Lord and a table of demons; that one cannot drink his cup in communion with Christ and in

communion with demons at the same time. And if we understand the command for a holy supper to be that each meal is to be eaten in remembrance of Christ, the food of the soul, and so in communion with him, we see that we cannot keep that command if we let evil enter the meal. If we allow our table to become a scene of quarreling, of gluttony, of lewd conversation, of godless revelry, we are communing with demons and so cannot be communing with Christ. But if we indeed make the loaf of each daily repast a remembrancer of Christ, the bread of heaven, then the daily table will be kept free from all evil, it will be a place of sacred thought, and we shall eat our meat in the "gladness" of a constant communing with our Lord.

It is from verse 16 of this chapter that to the breaking of bread has been given the name of "*The* Communion." In the original, however, and also the Revised Version, it not *the* but *a* communion, one of several forms of drawing near

to Christ. It is but another survival of the doctrine of the Real Presence which is seen in the idea that the church meal is "the holy of holies of Christian worship, the highest and closest union the church can ever enjoy on earth with her heavenly head," and considers admission to the church table a more solemn thing than to permit one to unite with us in prayer or praise to the Lord. A good statement of the New Testament doctrine is found in the Articles of Religion of the Reformed Episcopal Church:—"We feed on Christ only through his Word, and only by faith and prayer; and we feed on him, whether at our private devotions, or in our meditations, or on any occasion of public worship, or in the memorial symbolism of the Supper."

XI.

Love to the Brethren.

WE now come to the familiar passage in 1 Corinthians xi. At Corinth as at Troas there is an *agape* or church meal. But Paul declares that they so conduct it that it is "not for the better but for the worse" and that though designed as such it cannot truly be considered "a supper of the Lord."

It is from a mistranslation in this clause that the term "The Lord's Supper" has come to be applied to the Breaking of Bread. This is the only passage in which occurs the term κυριακὸν δεῖπνον and as it is not preceded by the definite article it cannot be considered a specific appellative. Therefore, the rendering should be not "*The* Lord's Supper" but, "*a* supper of the Lord," that is, a repast eaten in the spirit of

Christ. Meyer's construction of the passage is,—"There does not take place an eating of a Lord's supper," that is, "a meal belonging to the Lord, consecrated to Christ." See also *Cambridge Bible* and the translation of the American Baptist Publication Society.

The article on the "Lord's Supper" in Blunt's *Dictionary of Historical and Doctrinal Theology* speaks of it as "a term originally belonging to the love-feast" and adds, "It can scarcely be said to have been known as a name for the Eucharist in ancient times;" and again, "In early English whenever this name was used it was applied either to the Last Supper or to the marriage supper of the king in the parable." "In 1530 the term *Cœna Domini* is used in the Confession of Augsburg, which, and its adoption by Calvin, points perhaps to the origin of its popular use"—this being declared "a novel and inexact use of the term."

Prof. H. G. Weston of Crozer Theolog-

ical Seminary in his *Ecclesiology* says: —"The ordinance is not called 'The Lord's Supper' in the New Testament. In 1 Cor. xi. 20 where the phrase occurs, the apostle is not giving a proper name; if he were, the order of the Greek words would be different * * * Δεῖπνον cannot mean a morsel of food and a sip of wine."

The reason for the apostle's severe denunciation is given in verse 18,—and be it carefully noted that *only one reason* is given, namely, that there are "divisions" among them.

From early Christian writings we find that the ancient churches provided for their church meals much as we do for the church sociable and Sunday-school picnic of modern times, the well-to-do families bringing liberal gifts of provisions and those of limited means contributing according to their ability, while the poor were excused from bringing anything; but all was to be put into the common stock, so that poor and rich should share alike. It seems, however, that in the

wealthy church at Corinth lines of division had been drawn so that the rich members sat apart by themselves with their sumptuous viands, leaving their poorer brethren not only hungry but also cruelly slighted.

The *Cambridge Bible* says:—"The divisions among the Corinthian Christians were of the kind which we denominate 'sets' in a small society,—cliques and coteries, which were the product not so much of theological as of social antagonism. Thus the members of the Corinthian Church were accustomed to share their provisions with members of their own 'set' to the exclusion of those who, having an inferior social position had few provisions or none to bring. Hence while one was only too well provided with food, another had none."

Dr. Charles Hodge says:—"It is evident that agreeably to a familiar Grecian custom the persons assembled brought their own provisions, which being placed on the table formed a common stock. It

was however essential to the very idea of a Christian feast that it should be a communion, that all the guests at the table of their common Lord should be on terms of equality. Instead of this fraternal union, there were divisions among the Corinthians even at the Lord's table, the rich eating by themselves the provisions which they had brought and leaving their poorer brethren unsatisfied and hungry."

When thus they were guilty of "a cruel perversion of a feast of love into a means of humiliating and wounding their poorer brethren," what wonder that the apostle should declare that their meal was not "a supper of the Lord," a repast pervaded with Christlike love,—that it was not "for the better" as it might have been but "for the worse," an evil instead of a blessing, and that they might better have no church meal at all than such an unfraternal assembling!

To show how inconsistent their conduct was with that fellowship which should rule among those who profess to believe

in the same Saviour, the apostle recounts the incidents of Christ's command to eat and drink in remembrance of him. He reminds them of what he had before "delivered," that on his very last night with the disciples the Lord pointed it out that the bread which sustains the body is a symbol of him, the support of the soul, and that the blood of the grape is an image of his shed blood, and that he then commanded that henceforth always in eating bread and drinking the fruit of the vine they should be reminded of him and his death for them. Now if the wealthy Corinthians in eating their rich feast had been by it put in memory of the more precious bread of heaven, and drinking their red wine had been reminded by it of Christ's redeeming blood, they would also have thought with tenderness of their poorer brethren, Christ's little ones, servants of the same Lord and partakers of the same salvation. Wherefore he bids them "tarry one for another," sharing their meal in love, remembering that

all are one in Christ who died to save poor and rich alike.

There is lack of warrant for the common assertion that the meal at Corinth was marked by "excesses." This idea has arisen entirely from the phrase,—"another is drunken." But this stands contrasted, not with—one is sober, but with—one is hungry. The word used is that in John ii. 10—"When men have well drunk." This may mean—not, are intoxicated,—but, are sated, are cloyed. Godet says;—"The word μεθύειν usually signified to be intoxicated, but it may also be applied to eating, in the sense in which we say,—to eat his fill,—and so to form a contrast, as is the case in this passage, to πεινᾶν, *to be hungry.*" The passage might be construed as meaning merely,—another feasts, banquets, revels; the allusion being to the profusion placed before the sitter rather than to an immoderate participation therein. It is not in "another is drunken" but in the "one is hungry" that the gravamen of

the apostle's charge is found; the wrong being not so much in the abundance enjoyed by the one as in the co-existence of that profusion with his neighbor's destitution. The banqueting of the rich is not the subject of an additional charge but merely an illustration of the original charge, that of unfraternal "divisions."

And furthermore, had there been actual drunkenness the apostle would certainly have alluded to it again in telling them how they should conduct their meal. He does not however charge them to drink less or eat less, but only to "wait one for another," to let all share alike. Surely, he did not intend that all should become intoxicated!

Nor can we understand that the apostle condemns them for having an actual meal as distinguished from a "make-believe" supper. If the scholars quoted in a previous chapter were found to be correct in saying that the breaking of bread at Jerusalem, and at Troas, was an *agape*, an actual meal, should we be ready to

say therefore that the disciples in those cities ate and drank damnation to themselves? Cannot one "discern the body" and remember the Lord in an actual supper? Will not the loaf and cup of a true meal "shew" or "proclaim" the Lord's death? Just how meagre must a repast be in order that it may be eaten "in remembrance"?

So far from intimating that there should have been served only a morsel of bread and one sip of wine to each, which would have been no supper at all, the apostle's complaint is that the "hungry" brother (v. 21) was left hungry instead of being given a full satisfying meal. And again, the direction to "tarry one for another," that is to share their supper, would have no pertinence whatever if there was to be really no meal to share, nothing which a selfish person would be tempted to take "before other" for himself alone.

As to the passage, "If any man hunger, let him eat at home," it must be construed in connection with the arraign-

ment in verse 21,—"one is hungry." Here is one who did "hunger," but does the apostle mean to censure this poor brother that he did not get his supper before coming? Does he not the rather imply that this destitute saint ought to have found in the church gathering a good hearty meal such as his own poor dwelling would not afford? The meaning of the passage is simply this that if the rich man cares for nothing but feasting, if he has no desire for loving fellowship with his brethren, he had better feast at home, and not come to the church assembly to display his lack of fraternal spirit.

In like manner the question, "Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" is explained by the further inquiry whether they wish to "shame them that have not." Now, however costly viands the rich members had brought they would not have shamed their poorer brethren had they cordially invited the latter to sit down with them and share this bountiful provision. The putting to shame

was done, not in providing a rich feast but in eating that feast by themselves "before," right in the presence of, their humbler brethren but leaving them out of it. And the apostle tells these wealthy members that if all they care for is to banquet with their rich friends they had better do it in their own elegant houses, where at least they will not be giving their poorer brethren the cut direct and thus insulting the church of God in its tenderest emotions through an insult to its "little ones."

The apostle says, (Rev. Vers.),—"For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself if he discern not the body."

The loaf and cup of their *agape,* an actual meal, served to "proclaim the Lord's death" (p. 52), and could be called the bread and cup "of the Lord," for the Lord himself had pointed out the symbol of himself which resided in every loaf and every cup. And in taking of them a man should "prove himself," searching with care whether he was indeed gathering from them the lesson they set before him.

By "the body" some understand the Church, which is Christ's body, membership in which makes honorable the humblest disciple. Those did not "discern the body" who deemed it a thing of no import that their poorer brethren were enrolled with them in the Church of Christ. And this is practically the meaning even though the direct reference be to Christ himself, for if we duly reverence Christ we shall honor all who have been exalted by salvation through him. He who despises Christ's little ones despises Christ whose glory they share. And when the

rich Corinthians failed to have a proper judgment of the honor due their poorer brethren, they ate and drank judgment against themselves.

It is not eating and drinking unworthily to remember Christ in an actual meal; but to eat and drink with a wrong spirit. To "discern not the body":—this is not for one to see an image of Christ the bread of heaven in food taken to satisfy hunger as truly as in the loaf of ecclesiastical ceremony; it is to eat in a temper of mind which by sin against Christ reveals forgetfulness of him. It is not a mistake concerning the significance of a bit of ritual, but a wrong state of heart, on which condemnation is here pronounced. It was not ill-chosen forms, but an unchristly spirit, which aroused the apostle's indignation.

The Corinthians ate and drank unworthily not in having a liberal repast but in neglecting to share it with their poorer brethren. Says Chrysostom on this passage,—"For how can it be other

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than unworthily when one neglects the hungry and puts him to shame?" and,—"Thou hast tasted the blood of the Lord and not even then dost thou acknowledge thy brother. If even before this thou didst not know him thou oughtest to have recognized him at the table, but now thou dishonorest the table itself, for though thy poor brother has been deemed worthy a seat thereat thou judgest him not worthy of thy meat."

What the apostle condemns in the supper of the Corinthians is not an injudiciously bountiful bill of fare but a violation of the spirit of Christian love. Instead of being "a supper of the Lord," a *κυριακὸν δεῖπνον*, a supper eaten in the spirit of Christ, it was a man's "own supper," *τὸ ἴδιον δεῖπνον*, a supper eaten in the spirit of one's own selfishness. The blame is not for having a sumptuous repast but for not sharing it in love. The evil was not in the meal itself but in the spirit in which it was eaten.

We find then in this chapter not only

that the church meal at Corinth was an actual repast but also that Paul sanctions this, the only fault he finds being that the "hungry" are not filled thereat. His concluding injunction,—"Wherefore my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another,"—implies his approval of their continuing to have a liberal supper, provided only it be shared in true Christian fellowship.

To sum up: as we read the book of Acts and the Epistles, *we find no church supper but the Agape.* This was not a "ceremony," it was a true repast. Nowhere in Scripture is it taught that the remembrance of Christ should be only in the *simulacrum* of a meal. Nor does the remembrance of Christ in a church supper imply that he could not be remembered also in the home meal, any more than the holding of a church prayer-meeting implies that one should not pray by himself alone.

XII.

Historical.

SO far this discussion has been strictly biblical. It has rigidly confined itself to the question,—What is the meaning of these passages of Scripture which refer to the breaking of bread? The conclusion reached has been that the modern ecclesiastical supper, the taking of a morsel of bread and one swallow of wine, directly and solely for memorial purposes, is not what Jesus instituted; that his command, his "Ordinance," was a remembrance of him in every meal.

But though it were made plain beyond question that the New Testament contains neither prescription nor precedent for the modern church supper, many would still be unable to divest themselves of the belief that what has been the usage for so long a time must certainly

have come down from the Apostles. And the question will be asked,—Do you really mean to say that the whole church has been in error for so many centuries?

But if we assert this our boldness will not be without precedent. The Baptists do not hesitate to declare that nearly the whole church fell into error regarding the subjects of baptism; the Presbyterians affirm the same regarding orders in the ministry, and the Congregationlists make the same assertion concerning church government; and these, certainly, cannot declare it a thing incredible that there should have arisen in like manner the most widespread error concerning the breaking of bread.

Be it observed, moreover, that for nearly four centuries the "whole Church" has not held any one doctrine on this subject. The Roman Catholics have taught one thing, the Lutherans another, and in the Reformed Churches still other views have prevailed. Each of

these conflicting theories has been held by godly and learned men, which is saying also that each opinion in its turn has been condemned by men of deepest piety and profoundest erudition. When therefore the church doctors have thus nullified each others' authority, we are at perfect liberty to form our own opinion; indeed, their mutual condemnations have left us no resource whatever but to turn to the New Testament for ourselves, and take that view of its teachings which shall seem to us the correct one.

And, by the way, the appeal in this matter to Church authority is not one which Evangelical Protestants can well make, for the only one of these conflicting doctrines which that authority would in any way seem to support is the theory of transubstantiation, this being the only one which could make even the remotest claim to have been held *semper et ubique.*

That a usage is ancient does not prove that it was Apostolic. Even within a hundred years after the death of the

Apostles we find in the churches ideas and practices which Evangelical Protestants will declare to be without Apostolic sanction. The conception of the Eucharist as a sacrifice is found early in the Second Century. As early as the days of Justin Martyr we see the elements in the church supper sent to absent members, and in the writings of Ignatius, Irenæus and Tertullian we find superstitious views concerning baptism, the memorial eating and other usages. Good men very soon began to mix error with Christian faith.

We have seen that the memorial eating in the Apostolic churches was an ordinary meal of Christian fellowship. The expression in the *Didache* (x), "Now after that ye are filled," ἐμπλησθῆναι, would indicate that this was still the case in the Second Century. But there soon arose a superstitious confounding of symbol with substance, and there came to be a separation between the meal of fellowship or the "love-feast" and the

memorial eating and drinking, though the latter was still observed at the same sitting as the former, preceding or following it. In time the two were fully separated, and still later the love-feast was wholly abandoned, the actual supper becoming entirely a thing of the past, and there remained only a fictitious eating and drinking. Thus the mere simulacrum of a meal which is all that is found in the modern church, even in ultra Protestant communions, is derived not from Apostolic usage but from ecclesiastical superstitions. The current conception of the proper form of eating in remembrance of Christ is as destitute of support in church history as in Scripture.

In the course of centuries the idea gained full currency that the declaration, —"This is my body,"—meant that the loaf was Christ's body in constituent substance, becoming such when the priest pronounced these words of the Saviour. The dominance of this conception confirmed the change of the memorial eating

into a purely ecclesiastical institution. If only that bread is Christ's body which becomes such under the hands of the priest, no man can eat the holy supper except a priest minister to him. The sacred meal may be served to a single person but only a priest can dispense it.

On the other hand the Evangelical Churches when they discarded the doctrine of the Real Presence should have discarded also the idea of the necessity of a sacerdotal ministration. If the loaf be Christ's body only in symbol, a layman can preside at the breaking of bread the same as at a prayer meeting, for any disciple is competent to declare that the bread and wine are emblems of Christ's body and blood.

The Roman Catholic conception survives, however, even in ultra Protestant circles. The Westminster Confession recognizes only "ministers" as competent to "bless the elements," and give them to the people. And though Baptist writers on church polity all say that a church

could properly call on a deacon or private member to preside at the breaking of bread, this, in the United States at least, is seldom or never done; but a church will go for months without the memorial eating, if no "regularly ordained minister" is at hand to "officiate." Not even a licensed preacher and candidate for ordination will be allowed to act, but the good people will send miles away and bring some retired clergyman, a respectable old gentleman who has been for years engaged in school teaching or farming, and whose ordination like his vaccination must have run out long ago. This is akin to the superstition which still lingers in many Protestant Churches, that only an "ordained minister" can "pronounce the benediction."

And is it not a lingering of the mediæval idea that the bread on the Church table is Christ's actual body and must be approached with special awe, which makes the demand for a "preparatory lecture" or other special service to precede the

memorial eating? Of course we should proceed thoughtfully in all religious acts and there could be no objection if the prayer-meeting were opened with certain "preparatory" remarks. But the New Testament nowhere makes communion with Christ in the breaking of bread any more solemn an occasion than drawing near to him in prayer or praise or other Christian exercises.

Our inherited superstitions extend even to the utensils employed in the memorial eating. Preaching once in a little prairie church in Southern Illinois, and being called on to preside at the breaking of bread, I found on the table plates of common blue stone ware with ordinary glass tumblers, the wine being in a small pitcher from the every day table. I was shocked at such rustic informality. But on second thought I asked myself whether I had ever before seen a church table furnished so nearly like that of our Lord's Last Supper. For on that table in the "upper room" must have been merely

the cups and plates of daily household use; and I felt ashamed that, pretending to know something of New Testament history, I had mentally demanded a special "flagon" and "chalice" such as the Saviour certainly did not use.

How shocked should we be if at a church sociable where there was a shortage of dishes some one should propose to bring out the "Communion Service"! But the cup the Lord used that solemn night was doubtless put on the breakfast table the next morning. Numberless are the legends of the Holy Grail, the cup of the Last Supper, which the old Knights roamed the wide world over to seek. But there can be little doubt what became of the holy grail. It was used in the home service the next day, and the next, and so on for years, till battered and broken it was cast away; and as it lay there on the rubbish heap its fragments were sacred not alone because it had been pressed by the hands of the Lord, but also in that it had served a thousand

times to slake the thirst of toil and to bear the cooling draught to the fevered lips of the sick and in a multitude of other ways to do God's work in the world, till angel eyes could read upon it the "Holiness to the Lord." The cup of the Last Supper was the cup of the daily meal, and we add not to its sanctity when we dissociate it from the sacred services of the home life. And we shall show a more intelligent understanding of that Last Supper as a whole if we strive to remember Christ in every meal, as he then bade his disciples do.

Very many are the mistaken conceptions which have grown up in the Church in the course of the centuries, and it is difficult for us to get back to primitive views. As the shell long survives the death of the creature on which it grew, so erroneous ecclesiastical ideas and customs will remain in full force when the false doctrines in which they originated have been discarded for centuries. Even in ultra Evangelical circles there remains

much of "Romish" conception, and the medieval doctrine of the Real Presence still controls our procedure in the church meal. Though we claim that "the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants," the *Agape*, which is undeniably Apostolic, has no place in our church life, while the supper of ritual which is unknown to the New Testament and has no warrant except in ecclesiastical usage is regarded with an awe nearly if not quite superstitious.

As in Milton's description of the bringing forth of the beasts by the earth we see "the tawny lion, pawing to get free his hinder parts," so even the stoutest Protestantism needs to struggle and pull a little longer to disengage itself entirely from Roman Catholic ideas.

XIII.

Practical.

BUT what is the practical outcome of the doctrine of the preceding pages?—for it is by this alone that many will judge it. It may be answered most emphatically that there is nothing therein to which the most timid conservative can object.

It is merely proposed that a believer in Jesus sitting down to his daily bread shall ask a blessing substantially as follows,—"Oh Lord, I thank thee for this food which supports my mortal life, and now beholding in it a symbol of the bread of heaven, I pray that as I eat this which thou hast provided to sustain my bodily powers, my soul may feed on Christ the spiritual bread." Certainly no one can object to such a "grace before meat." But do you not see that this is in sub-

stance the prayer to be offered over the bread in church? We may say then with all boldness that the prayer made over the loaf in church may and should be, for substance, the "blessing" over the daily meal, and the meditations in the mind of the one who devoutly eats in church should be in our minds as we eat our daily food. And if to the invalid his physician has prescribed the drinking of the fruit of the vine, which, still unfermented, the most temperate may drink, why may he not behold in it an image of Christ's shed blood, and drink it with the same prayer and thoughts that attend the drinking in the church meal? Who shall say that it is a profanation if in every meal one reminds himself of Christ and his death the same as in the church supper?

Let it be noted that it is not here in any way suggested that the church meal be less honored, but only that the home meal also be made sacred. There is no wish nor willingness to degrade the

church ceremonial, but only to lift up the daily repast to an equal sacredness, to secure that the blessed thoughts which characterize the former shall pervade the latter also. It is not proposed to level down, but only to level up. Let the church supper continue to be a holy occasion but let it not be the only sacred hour. Why should it not rather be considered a "model" meal and object lesson, setting forth the spirit in which every meal shall be eaten, a "rehearsal" in which we learn more fully how properly to eat each week-day repast? And if it would not "degrade" the Sabbath did we seek to carry its spirit through the whole week how, pray, will it make the ecclesiastical meal less venerable if one resolves to make every breaking of bread as solemn, to give to every repast the sacredness which marks the supper in church?

Some will urge that it is impossible to make the family meal so sacred an occasion for we often get to talking, say of politics, and disputing, and then are

aroused angry feelings which banish all religious emotion. Now it is certainly true, as the apostle said, that "a table of demons" cannot be also "a table of the Lord" but happily there remains one solution of the difficulty, namely, to abstain from all unkind words and to admit to the family repast only those lovely emotions which are perfectly consistent with thoughts of Christ.

The objection may still be pressed under the modified form that it is allowable and often necessary that the conversation at the daily table shall be on topics altogether non-religious. But even when the mind is engaged with secular thoughts there may be in it a spiritual undertone. Take the emotion of gratitude for God's mercies: it is sincerely to be hoped that it does not entirely vanish from our minds with the last word of the "blessing." Through the talking and laughing of the Thanksgiving Dinner may there not remain in the mind a spirit of praise to Him who has crowned the year with his good-

ness? Beneath the hilarities of the Christmas feast may there not be many a sweet thought of the Christ-child of Bethlehem? Is it true that Christians can eat their daily bread only in the purely secular spirit of heathen men and publicans? Why should not every meal be eaten not only in physical but also in spiritual "gladness"?

The reformer Melancthon writes to a friend,—"There is not a day nor a night for more than ten years that I have not meditated on the holy supper." Possibly some of his thoughts were only polemic, for there was then waged an exciting and even acrimonious controversy on this topic. But why should not a disciple of to-day be able to declare that "for more than ten years" he has not sat down to a meal, when in taking bread for the support of his body he has not thought of Christ the food of his soul?

Some one may suggest that the memorial eating would lose its sacredness and become an empty form if we sought to

remember Christ in every meal. But this is the old argument of certain good Scotch Presbyterians against having the "sacrament" oftener than once in three months. (See John M. Mason's *Frequent Communion*).—Now would Christ's resurrection be celebrated more solemnly if we strove to remember it not so often as once a week but only in an annual Easter or on a Lord's Day once in five years? Should we be more devout in family prayer if we observed it but fortnightly, or in "grace before meat," if it was said only once a month? Would it be better to "consider the lilies" only at very rare intervals? May it not be that in religion, as in other things, that which is done oftenest will be done easiest?

The question is this,—May we not have substantially the same thoughts in the daily meal that we have in the Church Supper? And should we not? Unless a man says that we *ought not to try* to remember Christ in every meal he

cannot object to the practical side of the doctrine of the foregoing pages.

"Is not this the carpenter?" said the men of Nazareth;—"this young man whose family we all know, can he be the great Messiah?" And so asks some one, —"Can the daily meal be eaten in remembrance of Christ? Meat and potatoes,—can they remind us of the food of our souls?" But blessed is that disciple who is not "offended" at the fact that with the leaven and the mustard seed and the salt and the hen, lowly objects of every day life, Jesus has made the homely fare on the cottage board a symbol of the loftiest divine realities.

XIV.

The Church Supper.

IN the preceding pages no objection has been raised to the present custom as to the ecclesiastical breaking of bread. To be sure there is no Scripture precedent for the imitation meal of the modern church, but neither is there for a Christmas service, nor for the minister's wearing a peculiar gown in preaching or baptizing, nor for the ceremonial giving of "the right hand of fellowship" to new members of the church. The Apostolic churches never set out to do every single thing which would possibly be profitable in any congregation in all the future ages. If therefore, the modern church meal is found to be edifying, it may properly be continued even without exact Scripture precedent.

EVANGELICAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

It is not proper however to intimate that the church meal is the one and only supper of the Lord, that the loaf and cup on the church table are the only body and blood of Christ and that we have no right to remember Christ in any eating except that of church ceremony. The bread of the home meal is Christ's symbolic body just as truly as the loaf of the church supper, and if a disciple makes the daily loaf and cup a reminder of Christ's body and blood he obeys the command, "This do in remembrance of me," just as truly as do those who eat in church, and his repast is just as truly "a supper of the Lord."

Nor if we would employ strictly Biblical phraseology shall we use the term,—*The* Lord's Supper,—*The* Lord's table, or,—*The* Communion. The New Testament says merely,—*a* supper of the Lord, —*a* table of the Lord,—and *a* communion. (see pp. 86, 87, 89, also the original of 1 Cor. x. 16, 21, and xi. 20;) it appoints no one repast but every meal to be

eaten in remembrance of Christ and the "gladness" of communion with him.

The only name the New Testament gives to the sacred eating is the Jewish designation of the daily meal, namely, "the breaking of bread." As the Greeks called a supper, a *symposium* or a *drinking together*, the eating being implied, so the Jews called it a breaking of bread, the drinking being understood. But when the disciples "came together to break bread" we understand that it was not merely to eat together in friendship but also to remember Christ in so doing. Therefore a proper announcement of the church supper will be that the church will assemble for "the breaking of bread in remembrance of Christ"; or still better,—"The Remembrance of Christ in the Breaking of Bread." Let the spiritual exercise rather than the physical act be made prominent in the designation.

And since no change is to be wrought by priestly manipulation in the bread and wine on the church table, since all

that needs doing is to recognize that these, like the loaf and cup of the daily meal, are symbols of spiritual things, and to ask that they be blessed to the partakers as such, it is no more necessary that a particular ecclesiastical official preside at the church meal than that such a one be brought to "say grace" at the home table. Nor need it be thought that only a "deacon" can distribute the bread and wine. Whoever can properly "ask the blessing" and pass the food at the home table can do so in the church meal.

And let a welcome to the church supper be given to all devout persons, baptized or unbaptized.

Very early in the Church arose the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. It was held that one was "christened" or made a Christian, was brought into the spiritual life, in baptism and only in baptism; and then, since only those who possess the spiritual life can commune with Christ, it was declared that none

but baptized persons could be admitted to the church table.

In that very ancient writing, the *Didache*, (Ch. ix) we read,—"But let no one eat of your eucharist except those baptized into the name of the Lord, for concerning this the Lord hath said,—Give not that which is holy to the dogs." Here is the first enunciation of the rule of "close-communion," and the reason for it is plainly stated, namely, that a person not yet baptized is not spiritually fitted for the sacred eating. For fifteen centuries no other ground was pleaded for demanding baptism before the supper. Any medieval theologian would have given this reason alone for the rule. And the case is the same in nine-tenths of Christendom at the present time, for any Greek, Roman, Lutheran or Anglican authority of to-day will take the same position in denying the holy supper to the unbaptized.

Evangelical Protestants, however, who have renounced the doctrine of baptismal

regeneration, ought logically to renounce also the close-communion rule which flowed from that idea. But usages will long survive the doctrines which gave them rise, and so to-day a Presbyterian Church celebrating the "sacrament" would not invite to the table a new convert still awaiting baptism. And as sheep follow those going before them, Baptists also have unthinkingly adopted the course of the Roman Catholics and of Protestant Pedo-baptists, and they also stoutly declare that baptism is an "essential pre-requisite" to the church meal.

The refusal to admit the unbaptized to the table has in Pedobaptist churches no practical effect, for almost never would admission be desired by one who has not received what they will recognize as baptism. Baptists, however, finding in Scripture no baptism but a burial in water on profession of faith, are compelled under this rule to withhold the invitation from the great mass of their Christian brethren since these being merely sprinkled or

poured upon, and that in unconscious infancy, are in Baptist eyes only unbaptized converts.

It will be seen at a glance how unreasonable and how unjust is the outcry against the Baptists for "close-communion" as if they had some rule in this matter which others have not. The Baptists do merely what all churches do, namely, they refuse to invite to the table those who, in their view, have never been baptized. In the communion invitation itself, the Baptists have no restriction which the other churches do not maintain. They differ from others only on the question to whom this restriction applies. They merely refuse to admit that sprinkling in infancy is New Testament baptism. To condemn them for not inviting Presbyterians and Methodists to sit down with them at the table is simply to condemn them for refusing to admit that Presbyterians and Methodists have been baptized; it is merely to declare that they have no right to their opinion as Baptists.

But on the other hand the Baptists cannot fully defend themselves by pleading that "all other churches" exclude the unbaptized. That argument is merely *ad hominem;* it may be sufficient as against Episcopalians and Presbyterians, but it does not touch the principle. Why do Pedobaptist Protestants demand baptism before the Supper? It is because they are historically related to the Church of Rome, exhibiting in infant baptism and some other usages a survival of the Roman doctrine that one is "christened," that is, made a Christian, in baptism. For Roman Catholics and for "high church" Protestants holding the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, it is logical to hold to close communion, but the Baptists have always declared that a man is "christened" by faith alone, entirely apart from baptism, and so Baptists have no ground for withholding the Supper till after baptism.

The Baptist "logic of close communion" is faulty in this, that it rests on

one Pedobaptist premise. The idea that baptism is an "essential pre-requisite" to the sacred eating is not a Baptist doctrine, but, like infant baptism, it is an outcome of the idea of baptismal regeneration. In following "the other denominations" in adopting the close-communion rule, the Baptists have made a colossal surrender of their distinctive tenets. Let Baptists adhere strictly to their own principles, and they leave for "close communion" no basis whatever.

It is urged that in the New Testament we find no unbaptized person at the church supper. But neither do we find such a one asked to preach. In the Apostolic churches all who were invited into the pulpit were welcomed to the table.

Be it granted that baptism, which symbolizes the beginning of the new life, should precede the memorial eating in which is symbolized its maintenance. But to say that the band should head the procession is not to say that if the band has failed to put in an appearance the

line shall not move without it. To admit that baptism should precede the memorial eating is not to admit that the latter is unlawful unless so preceded.

It is urged that the Commission puts the "baptizing them" before the "teaching them to observe all things." But no Baptist pastor would hesitate to teach an unbaptized convert to hold family prayer nor to do any other Christian act, unless it be to eat "in remembrance." And now by what exegetical sleight of hand can the "all things" be narrowed down to this one thing, so that though a disciple still unbaptized may be taught to join us in every other Christian exercise he must not be welcomed to unite with us in breaking bread in remembrance of Christ?

He who accepts the Baptist principle cannot say that baptism is a pre-requisite to the memorial eating as faith is to baptism. If, as the Baptists hold, regeneration is not wrought, but only symbolized, in baptism, then to baptize one who is

not yet regenerate is an unreasonable act, an unmeaning rite. But if one be regenerated before baptism, then he, though still unbaptized, can make a "remembrance" of Christ as genuine as that of his baptized brother, and it is not an unmeaning and unreasonable act for him to eat bread and drink wine to assist such remembrance.

What is the object of the church supper? It is to aid us in our remembrance of Christ. But ought not our unbaptized brother also to remember the Saviour? We have already noted the statement that the Supper is "a symbol of the soul's feeding upon Christ" and now let us ask, concerning the disciple still unbaptized, whether it be not proper for his soul also to feed on Christ; and if this be proper who can object to the outward symbolizing of his spiritual act? Why cannot one remember Christ in the breaking of bread just as truly, as reasonably and as profitably before baptism as after? But if it be proper for the unbaptized disciple

to remember Christ and also to assist his remembrance by a breaking of bread, why should we not invite him to unite with us in the church when we are doing the same thing?

If as we were sitting down to a week-day meal with a convert not yet baptized he should say,—"Lo, this bread which sustains our mortal bodies is a symbol of Christ the bread of heaven, and now as we eat this material food let us think of Christ the heavenly manna," would it be incumbent on us to refuse to go on with the repast? But if we can unite with an unbaptized person in remembering Christ in the home meal, why may we not welcome him to remember the Lord with us at the church table?

If an unbaptized person said, "Let us sit down together and think of Christ," we might be willing so to do. Should he point to a picture of the crucifixion saying,—"Let us gaze at that picture on the wall that it may help us to think of Him," we might not object. If he drew

from his pocket a crucifix saying,—"Let us look on this that it may assist our thoughts," even a rigid Protestant might still consent. And now if he said,—"To remind ourselves of Christ, the bread of heaven, let us eat a piece of material bread, and to remind us of his shed blood let us drink of this red juice of the grape," why should we at last refuse? If we are willing to join with an unbaptized person in remembering Christ, why should we not consent to join with him in any reasonable act that will assist such remembrance?

What is the "Ordinance" of Christ? It is a Remembrance of him. The breaking of bread is simply a means thereto; it is the Remembrance itself that is the end, the essential thing. But ecclesiastical legalists have squarely reversed the divine idea. Says one party,—"We will cheerfully remember Christ with you, but we positively will not do it in the breaking of bread." The other party responds, —"We care not a fig for your remem-

bering Christ with us so long as you will not do it in the breaking of bread." Each party makes the outward act, the means, more important than the spiritual exercise which is the end.

It is an Ordinance of Christ that we commune with him in the breaking of bread. It is another Ordinance of his that we commune with him in prayer, and it is still another that we commune with him in praise. Now we find nowhere in Scripture or in common sense any "terms of communion" in the breaking of bread beyond what may be called for in a communion with Christ and our fellow disciples in prayer or the service of praise. The invitation to the memorial eating may be as wide as the welcome to join us in any other Christian exercise.

Therefore as the minister may say,—"We are about to engage in prayer in the name of Christ and we urge all present to unite with us therein," or,—"We are now about to sing a hymn of praise to Christ and all who will devoutly join

with us are invited so to do," so let him say,—"We are now about to engage in a remembrance of Christ through the breaking of bread, and all who would find a pleasure in so doing are joyfully welcomed to join us therein." Whether the unbaptized disciple be a member of the Society of Friends, rejecting all water baptism, or an accepted candidate for baptism still awaiting the rite, or some pious but misguided brother who has taken up with a pseudo-baptism in the place of the New Testament ceremony, he is as capable of a true "remembrance" of Christ as we are, and we may properly ask him to join us in such remembrance.

XV.

"*In Conclusion.*"

"BUT" asks some one—"will all the churches accept the foregoing doctrine, which is so different from their present ideas?" Certainly not.

If to those who are in the wrong on the doctrine of the Real Presence there were read an essay showing them most conclusively their error, would they all and at once abandon it? If to those who are astray in the matter of the act and subjects of Baptism there were presented a treatise making it plain from Scripture and history and reason how entirely they are mistaken, would they instantly and as one man change their practice? Nay, established conceptions are not so easily uprooted. Macaulay has remarked that no Catholic nation becomes Protestant and no Protestant country becomes

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Catholic. So, even with all the tracts and volumes written, no Baptist Church becomes Presbyterian nor Presbyterian, Baptist; no Episcopalian Church becomes Congregational and no Congregational Church, Episcopalian. We may think that we ourselves always follow pure reason, but we see plainly that our fellow men are influenced very little by argument as compared with hereditary predisposition, habitual training, and personal prejudice. Therefore, though every unbiased reader declared the argument in the foregoing pages as conclusive as a demonstration in Euclid, one could not expect it to have any very great effect. Nevertheless, argument is not always entirely thrown away; wherefore, if the reasoning in the preceding pages be indeed sound, it may give to here and there a disciple, and even to many a one, some suggestion which will return to his mind again and again, and which will serve to make for him his daily table "a table of the Lord."

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